SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

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DETROIT SENATORS WELCOME MOVEMENT ON MINIMUM WAGE

LANSING- Senate Democrats welcomed movement today in the Michigan Senate that would, if supported by the House and signed by Governor Granholm, raise the state minimum wage to \$6.95 by this fall. The Democrats said they welcome any movement that might help Michigan's struggling low-income workers and hoped that the GOP's recent conversion on the minimum wage issue is sincere.

"Raising the minimum wage is only fair," said Sen. Burton Leland (D-Detroit). "Minimum wage workers do some of our most difficult jobs, and it's time we gave them a hand up. I applaud my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support on this issue."

The substitute amendment passed by the Senate today will raise the state minimum wage to \$6.95 on October 1, 2006. The minimum wage will increase again on July 1, 2007 to \$7.15 and will be raised for a final time to \$7.40 on July 1, 2008. However, unlike an earlier proposal offered by the Senate Democrats, the amended bill will not tie future minimum wage increases to the rate of inflation nor codify the annual increases in the state constitution.

"I support the minimum wage increase," said Sen. Irma Clark-Coleman (D-Detroit). "For the men and women who have worked hard day after day only to realize that the current minimum wage has been barely enough to feed their families and pay the bills, this increase couldn't have come at a better time. We thank Governor Jennifer Granholm for calling for the increase in the minimum wage in her State of the State Address and urging legislators to take action."

Senate Democrats first introduced the minimum wage legislation in March of 2005. Democrats say they will continue to put their full support behind a petition drive to raise the state minimum wage unless a legislative agreement is reached.

"The cost of urban living has increased dramatically in recent years, and raising the minimum wage will help many hard-working families," said Sen. Martha G. Scott (D-Highland Park). "The faster we get this bill to the Governor's desk, the more quickly struggling workers will get relief."

"Passage of this legislation means that the hard-working men and women in this state, who are sometimes forgotten, will be able to take care of their families in an economy with steadily rising prices," Sen. Hansen Clarke (D-Detroit) said. It's been nine years since the minimum wage has been increased. Yet, during that time the cost of food, clothing, gas and other basic necessities has gone up. It's time the minimum wage kept pace, and this increase will help families pay for these basic necessities."